(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) to what extent the Charter was useful in supporting the mitigation and relief related activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The International Charter on Space and Major Disasters was invoked immediately after the Tsunami disaster. Under the charter, data from several satellites such as ENVISAT, SPOT and RADARSAT was received covering the affected regions in Tamil Nadu, UT of Andaman and Nicobar and the neighbouring countries of Maldives, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. The microwave data from RADARSAT was found to be useful when integrated with Indian Remote Sensing satellite data for preparing inundation maps and assessing the damage in the affected areas.

Practice of branding women as witches

3005. DR. ABHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported recommendations voicing concern about continuing practice of branding women as witches and the insufficiency and inadequacy of the penalty provisions of law to prevent such crimes;

(b) if so, the details of the recommendations; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MANIKRAO GAVIT): (a) to (c) Concerns about continuing practice of branding women as witches and the need for taking adequate measures to eliminate this evil practice have been raised from time to time. The 'Public Order' and 'Police' being State subjects, primarily the State Governments are responsible for preventing and controlling all crimes including crimes against the women. However, the Union Government has advised the State Governments to take strong action for eliminating the practice of branding women as witches, consider making laws more stringent, provide financial and health facilities in the villages to obviate the need for them to approach black magicians (witch doctors) and to rehabilitate the women branded as witches.